SHERIDAN'S HAND.

SPRUNG TWO ACES OF DIAMONDS ON CONKLING IN A JACK POT.

Very Much Embarrassed When His Attention Was Called to the Error — The Little General Wanted the Story Kept Quiet, but It Was Too Good.

"I was in a poker game," writes a correspondent of the Washington Star, "in the winter of 1879, when Senator Conkling and General Phil Sheridan were players. It was a four handed game, and John Chamberlin was the other player. This game at Chamberlin's was always for a $5 limit at first, with the understanding that along toward morning, after a couple of hours of warming up, anybody could suggest the removal of the limit if he wanted to. The way Conkling and Sheridan bluffed each other that night was a caution. Both men seemed to strike out luck altogether as an element in their good natured play against each other, and as both of them caught fine hands occasionally when engaged in this tug of war of bluffing neither of them could get an exact line on the other, and it was better than a play to study their faces at the show downs. Conkling was having all the success during the latter part of the night, and it was fun to hear Little Phil softly utter dark and woolly things under his breath when, time after time, Conkling would show a hand consisting of nothing at all after having scared Sheridan out or produce a gorgeous set of fours or a full hand at such times as Sheridan, deciding that the senator was bluffing, would call him.

"'Bite him, Sheridan,' Chamberlin would say amusedly on these occasions, and Sheridan would tell Chamberlin to go to the dickens and call for another deck of cards.

"We started the last round of jack pots with a new deck. Sheridan dealt the first mess himself, and after it had gone around and none of the three of us could open it Sheridan opened it himself. Neither Chamberlin nor I had any right to stay on our hands, so it was left between Sheridan and Conkling, who staid. Conkling took three cards and turned his little pair into threes. Sheridan dished himself out three cards and bit his cigar hard when he saw his hand. He made a $5 bet to draw Conkling out, and the senator raised him $25. It passed between them with these $25 bets until there was nearly $300 in the pot, both men scrutinizing each other pretty carefully at each bet.

"'I don't know so much about you this time,' said Conkling finally, 'and I think I'll just call you for safety.'

"Both laid their hands down at the same time. Conkling had three nines, and he looked at Sheridan strangely when he saw the color of Sheridan's three aces. Both Chamberlin and myself also saw what was wrong at the same instant, but we only smiled and let the two men have it out. Sheridan had a broad grin on his face and was just about to rake in the pot. Conkling was gazing at the little man of iron with a puzzled look in his eyes.

"'Oh, I say, there, Phil, just wait a minute,' said he. 'Do you really think that pot belongs to you?'

"'Belongs to me?' said Sheridan. 'Well, it does if the nose on my face belongs to me.' And again he reached over to hoe in the pot.

"Conkling ran his hand through his hair and again stopped Sheridan with a gesture.

"'I don't remember ever having seen that sort of thing before,' he said. 'Did you, Phil?'

"'See what sort of thing before?' said Sheridan. 'What in blazes are you talking about, Conkling?'

"For reply Conkling put one finger upon one of Sheridan's aces and then pointed to another one of the aces.

"'I never saw a jack pot won with three aces, two of which happened to be aces of diamonds,' said Conkling, smiling.

"Sheridan looked at his hand, lying face up on the table before him, and his face became fiery red. The consternation on his countenance was really funny.

"'Why,' said he after a minute, 'blamed if I don't believe I'm nothing better than an involuntary swindler. That other ace, you see, is a club. I opened the pot on a pair of red aces, and they were, of course, these aces of diamonds. Chamberlin,' turning to the amused boniface, 'turn me out of doors as a fraud and a short card player, will you?'

"'And have the army fire a volley over the ruins of my house?' replied Chamberlin. 'Hardly. Anyhow, I'd rather see you and Conkling engage in a rough and tumble fight over the thing. Go ahead, the pair of you. We'll see fair play,' turning to me.

"Of course the extra ace of diamonds had slipped into the deck accidentally before it left the manufacturer's hands, but Sheridan, when he had in a measure recovered from his surprise of the revelation, made a humorous pretension that he had known the whole thing all along and convulsed the three of us by feelingly appealing to Conkling to refrain from exposing him to the world for the sake of his family and all that sort of thing. The hand being foul, the pot was of course divided."

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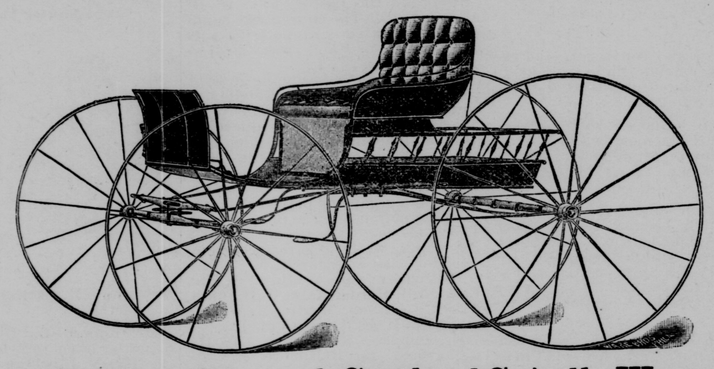
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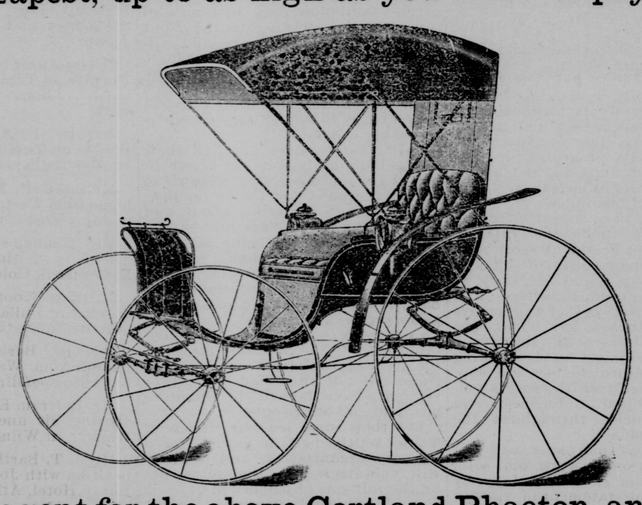
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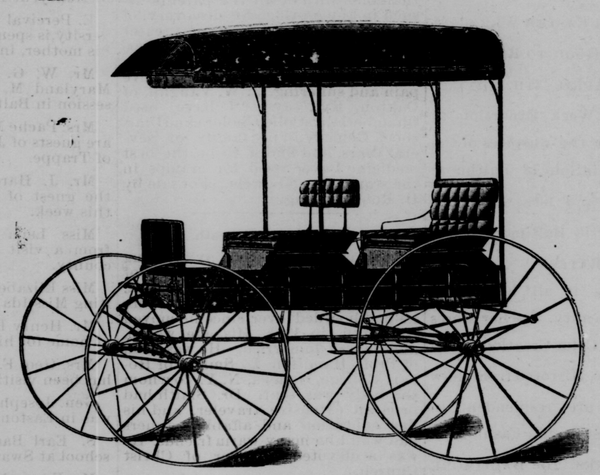
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